



A Campaign to Prevent Inhalant Abuse

Bureau of Substance Abuse Services
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Examples of Inhalant Abuse Prevention Messages

Messages about drug abuse prevention are most often delivered in health or drug abuse prevention classes. However, when we provide inhalant abuse prevention messages, additional approaches should be considered. Because products that are abused as inhalants are found throughout schools, youth programs, and homes, a much broader approach should be used for delivering prevention messages. Often, we can deliver a prevention message about inhalants by adding a few sentences to health and safety messages we are already delivering. *An additional benefit is that we reinforce the association of inhalants as hazardous substances (that is, a poison, toxin, pollutant, and fire hazard) without suggesting or reinforcing the idea that inhalants have a drug-like effect.* Below are listed examples of these messages and where they can be delivered.

Examples of Inhalant Abuse Prevention Messages

Lessons on Poisons and Pollution	"There are many ways that poisons (or pollution) can get into your body. (Question to class: What are some ways that poisons can get into your body?) One type of poison is a poison that you might breathe. These are chemicals that evaporate or go into the air from paint, glue, gasoline, and all aerosol containers. They are poisonous and can damage our lungs, liver, kidneys, nerves and brain. It is important to keep these poisons out of the air and water and not let them into your body."
Fire Safety	"Some things we have learned about that are flammable or explosive are also dangerous to breathe. All gases and liquids that burn easily or explode, such as gasoline, oil-based paints and thinners, nail polish remover, propane, and butane, are also poisonous to breathe."
First Aid	<p>–"Solvents are poisons that can have harmful effects on our bodies. . . ."</p> <p>–"If we don't use products (like paints, aerosols, gasoline, solvents, art and office supplies, etc.) safely, they can make us feel nauseous, cough, hurt our judgement and, in the long-run, damage our bodies. They can even kill us."</p> <p>–"How can we use these products safely to avoid these effects?" (Use out of doors or in a well-ventilated room, use safety masks with special filters, etc.)</p> <p>–"What should you do if you feel the effects of a solvent?" (Open windows, get fresh air, increase ventilation. . . . If someone has become unconscious, call an ambulance immediately.)</p>
Arts and Crafts, Shops, Labs, Cosmetology	"When we use solvents and solvent-based products (such as, paints, glues, volatile solvents, nail polish, nail polish remover, aerosol hair sprays) we have to take certain precautions. We make sure that we have good ventilation and/or use protective filter masks. We avoid breathing the fumes because they are poisonous and can damage our lungs, liver, kidneys, nerves, and brain. They can also cause sudden death."
Cooking	<p>–"Aerosol cooking oil sprays use propane and iso-butane as propellants. These are fuel gases and we need to be careful when using them around open fires. The propellants are also dangerous poisons to breathe. They can cause brain damage and instant death."</p> <p>–"Whipped cream in cans uses nitrous oxide (an anaesthetic gas) as a propellant. Breathing this industrial gas, even at low levels, can result in nerve damage. Overdoses can cause death by choking, suffocation, or by stopping your breathing."</p>